*An update from Fr. Jay*

April 18, 2024

***Dear friends,***

It's been a long time since I’ve been able to see you and visit with you and I just want to say first, thank you for your prayers. They've meant everything to me.

This has been a very challenging time for me. When my cancer returned at Christmas it was a real shock. My oncologist says I’m terminal. So I'm dealing with that reality. But we are not giving up. We are doing everything we can to try and beat this.

I’m preparing for what is called CAR T-cell immunotherapy. It’s a kind of last ditch effort to beat this cancer and find a cure. I’ve been spending every day of the week down at the Fred Hutch Center receiving platelets and units of blood. For example, yesterday I got two units of platelets. So this has been kind of my life!

The first week in May I will be receiving my own T-cells that have been removed from my body and have been incubated and will be put back into my body. May 1st, 2nd and 3rd, I’ll be doing chemo three days in a row. Then on May 7th I’ll be receiving my T-cells.

Once I receive my T-cells I will be immunocompromised for quite some time. There are a lot of possible complications with this therapy including seizures, heart problems, all sorts of things. I won’t be permitted to drive for two months. Which won't be much different since I haven’t been able to drive this past month anyway! Back in March, my arm fractured because of cancer. They put in metal work and did reconstruction on my elbow. This has been my life! This CAR T-cell therapy has a seventy percent chance of success. This is what we are hoping for. This is what we are praying for.

Of course with the Partners in the Gospel, this couldn’t happen at a worse time for the church. The church is moving forward this July when our three parishes will begin working together. As most of you know, I have been asked if I would be pastor for the three parishes. This of course will depend on my recovery and my health. So keep me in your prayers. I pray for you everyday. I look forward to June when I will be able to see you again!

God bless everyone and may God bless our community and may God be with me as well. Thank you everyone!

***Fr. Jay DeFolco***